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PRE-FASCIST GROUPS IN GERMANY, 1918-1933

Description

A brief account of nationalist and racial groups which developed in Germany after the first World War; the relation of these groups to the development of Nazi ideology and practice; the methods by which the Nazi Party co-ordinated and dominated these groups.

4 April 1945

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary i

I. INTRODUCTION. 1

II. THE NATIONALIST LEAGUES. 2

A. Deutschnationale Volkspartei and Stahlhelm 2

B. The Jugdo. 4

C. The Bavarian Defense Leagues 5

D. Student and Intellectual Groups. 8

E. The Harzburg Front 9

III. THE VÖLKISCH (RACIAL) LEAGUES 12

A. Alldeutscher Verband 12

B. Organisation Consul, Oberland Bund, Rossbach Brigade . . 13

C. Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei 16

D. Other Völkisch Groups. 17

E. The Holstein Agricultural Leagues. 18

IV. THE NATIONAL BOLSHEVISTS 20

A. The Origin and Aims of National Bolshevism 20

B. Typical National Bolshevist Elements 22

1. The National Communists (National-Kommunisten) . . . 22

2. Dissident National Socialists. 22

3. Nationalist Révolutionaries. 26

C. The Elimination of the left-wing opposition from the Nazi Party. 26

V. CONCLUSION. 29

APPENDIX: ORGANIZATIONS. 31

SUMMARY

The rise of the Nazi Party can be understood in terms of the history of German nationalism as it was reflected and molded by the various nationalist and racial groups that sprang up in Germany after the first World War. Some of these pre-fascist groups followed traditional nationalist lines and reached the proportions of nationwide parties; others sought to achieve the old imperial aims while emphasizing in particular the concepts of Pan-Germanism and German racial supremacy; still others attempted to unite rightist and leftist extremes in what came to be called "National Bolshevism".

Among the first set, the nationalist parties and leagues, the most important was the German Nationalist People's Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei), an organization which maintained the traditions of the pro-imperial Konservative Partei of pre-1918 days. Aligned with the party in defense of aristocratic and industrial interests was the Stahlhelm, a para-military force of war veterans. Another nationalist league was the Jungdo (Jungdeutscher Orden or Young Germans' Order), which advocated military preparedness in a fraternal community of "folk and fate" and for a while received financial support from various industrialists. The Bavarian defense leagues represented south German opposition to Prussian control and Social Democratic leadership. They provided a rich soil for the growth of reactionary ideas and served as training grounds for many future members of the Nazi Party. Among the other activities of the defense leagues was the overthrowing in 1919 of the Bavarian Councils Republic, a project in which they were supported by rightist Free Corps from Prussia and Württemberg. Still another related group was constituted by the nationalist student fraternities, such as the Burschenschaften, Landsmannschaften, and Studentenkorps, and certain circles of intellectuals such as Friedrich Zimmermann's Tat-Kreis. An important example of active co-operation between the Nazis and one of these groups, the Deutschnationale Volkspartei, was the so-called Harzburg Front, which was formed in 1931 and played a major role in Hitler's rise to the chancellorship.

The racial or völkisch associations had aims which were similar to those of the groups described above but placed their emphasis more precisely on the Herrenvolk aspect of German expansionism. The origins of all these associations can be traded to the Pan-German League, founded in the nineteenth century. Unlike the nationalist leagues, most of the völkisch groups joined the Nazis at an early date. The Organisation Consul, the first band to employ the swastika emblem in Germany, engineered a series of political murders, including that of Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau; it was to a large extent absorbed into the SS and SA. Other leagues were more regional in composition, e.g., the Bavarian Oberland/Bund and the Rossbach Brigade, which operated to protect the Mecklenburg Junkers. The German Racial Freedom Front (Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei) hoped at first to lead in the uniting of all the völkisch groups, but in March 1923 allied itself with the Nazis. General Erich Ludendorff founded the Tannenbergbund on a platform of hatred for "Jesuits, Jews, and Freemasons"; thus, before complicity in Hitler's Munich putsch destroyed his political importance, Ludendorff elaborated the "stab-in-the-back" legend and helped to inject the strong pagan element into the Nazis' early ideology. The Artamanen, a "back to the soil" movement, and the Holstein Agricultural Leagues made a contribution to the Nazi program in the concept of Blut und Boden -- "Blood and Soil."

The third pre-fascist class, the National Bolshevists, was composed of two distinct extremes, right and left. Both elements opposed democracy, the Treaty of Versailles, and the Weimar Republic's Western orientation in foreign policy. But while the left aimed at utilizing nationalism to achieve bolshevization, the right hoped to channel proletarian discontent in the direction of expansionism. Not only did the National Bolshevists have an effect upon German Communism, but they also helped to inculcate the idea that the Nazi Party should aim at social revolution. Related to National Bolshevism was the class of dissident National Socialists represented by such men as the Strasser

brothers. Gregor and Otto, a group which eventually was liquidated in the Blood Purge of 1934.

From the various groups, the Nazi Party derived ideas, phases and slogans, symbols, uniforms, and, above all, personnel. In the beginning the Nazis were forced to view these various organizations as rivals. Eventually, however, the assets of Hitler's demagogic ability and their superior strategy, especially the cloak of "legality", enabled the Nazis to co-ordinate the pre-fascist elements and to make a broad appeal to seemingly conflicting segments of German society. Part of their success was due to their exploitation of anti-Semitism as a political weapon, creating a common enemy for all the divergent leagues and agitation groups. By their use of open methods and of established political institutions, the Nazis demonstrated that a nationalist party such as theirs could come to power without the use of secret or revolutionary expedients.

PRE-FASCIST GROUPS IN GERMANY, 1918-1933

I. INTRODUCTION

After the German defeat in the first World War, many nationalist and racial (völkisch) associations were formed which opposed the terms of peace and the government established under the Weimar constitution. As products of defeat, these groups formulated new theories of national power and political action. Some of these associations, such as the Free Corps, waged civil war in Germany and fought the troops of foreign powers to prevent any changes in the national frontiers, others engaged in less overt political activity or attempted through rigid group controls to perpetuate the traditions of nationalism.[1]

Until the time of the Kapp putsch in 1920, when various reactionary officers attempted to overthrow the Weimar state, the characteristic aim of most of the leagues had been the restoration of the Imperial regime. After the failure of the Kapp putsch, however, various leagues began to formulate new theories and methods designed to overcome the resistance of democratic forces, to seize power, and to establish a fascist state. Their work helped to prepare the way for the Nazis and supplied the Nazi Party with personnel, mass support, and symbols of mass action.

On the basis of their origin and views, these political leagues or associations may be classified as (1) nationalist, (2) völkisch or racial, (3) National Bolshevist. In the following pages the various leagues will be examined under these categories. The nationalist groups retained the old militaristic-imperialistic views prevalent under the Empire. The völkisch groups developed new forms of nationalism primarily on a racial basis. The National Bolshevist groups were to be found both on the extreme right and the extreme left. They were united on the objective of achieving a revolution in Germany, but their methods were different.

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1. R&A Report No. 1934.2 "The Pattern of Illegal Activity after the Last War: The Free Corps."

II. THE NATIONALIST LEAGUES

A. Deutschnationale Volkspartei and Stahlhelm

The most important nationalist political party in Germany during the Weimar Republic was the Deutschnationale Volkspartei (German Nationalist People's Party). It was the continuation of the pre-1918 Konservative Partei, which had been the chief supporter of the monarchy and the imperial regime. The Deutschnationale Party in representing the interests of the Rhineland heavy industry and the East Elbian Junkers, combined the continued existence of German feudal elements with the needs of German capitalism. Under the leadership of the industrialist and newspaper owner, Alfred Hugenberg, the Deutschnationale built up a powerful political machine.

Until 1930 the Deutschnationale was the strongest rightist party and opposed any action taken by the Social Democrats or by the so-called Weimar bloc. Through its own trade union, the Deutschnationale Handlungshilfen-Verband, it attempted to organize the white-collar workers and alienate them from the factory workers. This union was affiliated with the General Christian National Federation of German Trade Unions, but was in frequent disagreement with its Catholic leadership.

Aligned with the party in the role of a defense league was the Stahlhelm (Steel Helmet), an association of war veterans. This organization claimed to be independent of all political parties and its avowed purpose was to foster "comradely solidarity" among ex-soldiers under the guidance of former officers. While there was no objection in principle to the admittance of Social Democrats or Jewish veterans, these groups were hardly represented, and the Stahlhelm consisted overwhelmingly of representatives of the conservative and militarist elements in German society.

The founder and head of the organization was Franz Seldte, an industrialist from Magdeburg. President Hindenburg was the honorary chairman of the organization, and Lt. Col. Theodor Düsterberg was its military commander. The group had more than a thousand local posts

scattered throughout Germany. To perpetuate its ideals, a youth movement was established for the sons of veterans to educate them for the "defense of Germany." In Stahlhelm terms, this slogan was usually interpreted as a war of revenge against the Allied states. Called Werwolf, this youth movement played an important role in propagandizing German nationalism. The veterans group also had its own newspaper, Der Stahlhelm, which in spite of its limited circulation had considerable influence.

The Stahlhelm was a typical nationalist organization. It attempted to keep alive faith in the old Imperial Army by circulating the myth that the Army had never been defeated in battle but had been "stabbed in the back" by a revolution at home. Consequently, the Stahlhelm was a bitter enemy of the Weimar Republic and its "red" leaders but a strong supporter of the Reichswehr and any plans for German rearmament.

In October 1923 Stahlhelm members were used as auxiliary troops when the Reichswehr suppressed the coalition government of the Social Democrats and Communists in Saxony and Thuringia. In the same year, the national organization demanded the dissolution of the German parliament and the establishment of a nationalist dictatorship. They called for the imposition of the death sentence upon strikers and rioters. The stabilization of the mark in 1924 and the return to normal conditions in Germany served only to postpone the Stahlhelm's offensive against the republic. In 1927, for example, Seldte proposed that this organization join with Captain Ehrhardt,[1] the notorious Free Corps leader, in a march on Berlin "to free the city from the specter of red dictatorship." The military exercises of the Stahlhelm in 1929 led the Prussian Government to ban the organization in the Rhine Province, but following an appeal by Seldte to President Hindenburg the ban was removed. The following year, the Stahlhelm arranged a demonstration of 100,000 of its members to make known that "the will of the German people to be a military power

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1. See p. 13 below.

cannot be kept down nor can it be kept in chains by coercion."[1] The conflict spread to broader issues. In the presidential elections of 1932, Hindenberg, the honorary chairman of the Stahlhelm, was the candidate of the Social Democrats and the Center Party. To avoid a coalition with these groups, the Deutschnationale and Stahlhelm nominated Theodor Düsterberg for the office, but the Nazis brought about his defeat when they revealed that his great-grandfather was a Jew.

Within a year, however, the Deutschnationale and the Nazis had formed a new coalition and succeeded in making Hitler Chancellor in 1933.[2] Hugenberg became Minister for Economic Affairs for a short period before resigning. Seldte was appointed Minister of Labor in the coalition cabinet. In the hope that this position would enable him to postpone the liquidation of the Stahlhelm he joined the Nazi Party in defiance of the statutes of his organization and even expelled Düsterberg from his organization. In June 1933, however, the SA occupied the headquarters of the Stahlhelm, liquidating the entire organization and confiscating its property on the grounds that it was "an enemy of the state." Seldte, nevertheless remained the titular head of the Reich Ministry of Labor.

B. The Jungdo

The Jungdeutscher Orden or Jungdo (Young Germans' Order) had much in common with the Stahlhelm. Both groups claimed that they were "unpolitical" and "above party," and both sought to restore German military power and to suppress democratic institutions which were alleged to be a hindrance to rearmament. But the Jungdo did not wish to revive the monarchy and proposed instead a new racial community based on vague Christian principles.

The "Grandmaster" of Jungdo was Arthur Marauhn of Kassel. He devised a constitution for the order which attempted to revive the tradi-

1. Deutsche Zeitung, 6 October 1930.
2. For elaboration, see pp. 9-10 below.

tions of the Teutonic Knights and the institutions of medieval Germany. The order was divided into provinces (Balleien), each under the leadership of a "castellan" (Komtur). Jungdo's program denounced "Jewish-Marxist materialism" and advocated a pure life of military training and preparedness in a fraternal community of "folk and fate" (Volks- und Schicksalsgemeinschaft). The Order proposed to overcome conflict between capital and labor by the revival of medieval modes of production.

Jungdo often engaged in violent activity. In 1923 when Captain Ehrhardt's Wiking Bund invaded Franconia as a preliminary step to a march on Berlin, units from Jungdo and the Stahlhelm joined the expedition. After the failure of this putsch, Jungdo engaged in a bitter, but unsuccessful struggle with the Wiking Bund over the possession of the large stores of illegal weapons.

In its initial stages, the organization was financed by various industrialists and approved by the Reichswehr, but in view of the medievalism of its economic and social progra, this support was gradually withdrawn. Marauhn was forced to seek support from various financial interests, and as a result of these connections, Jungdo became affiliated in 1930 with the Staatspartei (the post-war continuation of the Demokratische Partei). Under this aegis it now professed republican aims. Along with the Staatspartei, Jungdo was liquidated in 1933.

Jungdo was an important precursor of German Fascism by virtue of its contribution of the idea of the corporate state (Standestaat), a concept claimed by the Nazis as their own goal[1] in the period up to 1934.

C. The Bavarian Defense Leagues

The Bavarian defense leagues were an outgrowth of Bavarian particularism, which refused to accept Prussian control, and a conservatism, which rejected Social Democratic leadership as "bolshevist." The movement appealed primarily to the urban middle class and the peasantry. The

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1. Its general counsel, Dr. Reinhard Höhn, is now one of Nazism's outstanding constitutional lawyers.

leagues were first established during the German revolution and at the time the Weimar state was being erected. Their first object of attack was the Bavarian Councils Republic which had followed the Bavarian Peoples' Republic founded under the leadership of Kurt Eisner. In overthrowing the leftish government, the leagues were aided by Free Corps from Prussia and Württemberg.

The Bavarian leagues were continued after 1919 in the Bayerisch Einwohnerwehr (Bavarian Citizen's Militia) under Georg Escherich, an official in the forestry administration, and one Kanzler. Their new organization demanded the right to retain the weapons and ammunition taken from the stores of the Imperial Army after the armistice and sought to prevent their surrender to the Allied Commission. In attempting to keep these weapons, the militia groups flouted both the Treaty of Versailles and German law. After repeated demands by the Allies states, the Reich Government effected the dissolution of the Einwohnerwehr. In spite of the opposition of the Bavarian state administration, the dissolution was finally carried out in 1921, but Escherich immediately regrouped his followers in the Vereinigte Vaterländische Verbände or V.V.V. (United Fatherland Leagues).

The policy of the V.V.V. clearly expressed the political orientation of the same groups which more or less supported the defense leagues: the small farmers, Bavarian Catholics, and monarchists. The union advocated Bavarian autonomy and revived the old controversy with the Reich concerning the special privileges which had been granted to Bavaria at the time of unification in 1871. The conflict came to a head in 1922 when the Reichstag, following the assassinations of Mathias Erzberger and Walter Rathenau, passed the "Law for the Protection of the Republic" designed to curb the activities of the armed leagues. The law set up a special court, but the Bavarians were able to arrange the use of "regular" court procedure in trying cases of political murder in Bavaria. Consequently, political murders and terrorists from other parts of Germany found refuge in that state, either with the help of the police or the V.V.V.

The most important league in the V.V.V. was the Bayern und Reich, located in Munich. This league had been founded by Dr. Pittinger of Regensburg who was alleged to have made a fortune through shady army contracts. Von Kahr, prime minister of Bavaria and a leader of Bavarian particularism, was honorary chairman. The league followed a monarchist, anti-Semitic and particularist policy and found considerable support among the South German students. In the hope of establishing a Danubian monarchy free from the control of "Red Berlin," Pittinger established contacts with a similar group in Hungary called "The Awakening Magyars."

Outside the V.V.V. the largest of the Bavarian leagues was the Reichsflagge under the leadership of Captain Heiss of Nüremberg. The Reichsflagge together with the Oberland Bund at first opposed the particularist tendencies of the V.V.V. and co-operated with the Nazis in a rally in 1923 for the purpose of showing loyalty to the Reich. But after the failure of Hitler's putsch in 1923, the Reichsflagge adopted a particularist point of view. This change in policy brought about a split in its organization. One group withdrew to establish a new organization called the Reichskriegsflagge which was later taken over by Captain Ernst Röhm and eventually incorporated into the Nazi Party as Storm Troopers. The other group remained a Bavarian particularist league until its suppression by the Nazis.

The division between the pro-Nazi leagues and the particularist leagues provided the chief theme in Bavarian politics from 1919 to 1923. This division was sharpened by the growing antagonism between the Bavarian administration and the central government. The conflict reached its peak in 1923 when the Bavarian state appointed von Kahr as Generalstaatskommissar and ordered the Reichswehr troops under General von Lossow stationed in Bavaria to swear allegiance to him. A month later, however, von Kahr and von Lossow switched back to the side of the Reich and crushed the Hitler putsch.

After the events of 1923 and the stabilization of the mark in 1924, Bavarian autonomy practically disappeared as a political issue, but

the leagues remained in existence although their membership was small. After Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, the Bavarian particularists attempted to resist Nazification and the centralization of all power in Berlin by establishing a south German monarchy under Prince Rupprecht, the Bavarian pretender. This move, led by von Kahr, was defeated by the Bavarian Nazis under General von Epp in 1933. Von Kahr was murdered in the Nazi Blood Purge of the following year.

D. Student and Intellectual Groups

During the Weimar Republic, the students in the German universities were organized into two distinct groups. On the one hand there was the liberal Free Students Association which supported the republic. Opposed to this organization were the so-called corporations (fraternities), consisting of Burschenschaften, Landsmannschaften, and Studentenkorps. These organizations were organized as duelling societies. The Burschenschaften and Landsmannschaften claimed that they represented the liberal tradition of 1848. Their members were drawn from the middle class, and although their colors were black-red-gold, they emphasized that this choice had no connection with the republican flag. The more exclusive Studentenkorps drew their members from the sons of the nobility, big landowners, and rich industrialists. Membership in these groups produced such castes in German society, that, to enter such fields as diplomacy and the higher civil service, it was almost necessary to belong to a Korps. After leaving the university, members continued to belong to the Korps as Alte Herren or alumni and exercised a strong influence on the Korps through nepotism and financial aid.

During the Weimar Republic, the Korps played a counter-revolutionary role. Feeling that their traditional claim on official positions was threatened by the rise of political ministers and an administration drawn from party bureaucracies, they provided many members for the Free Corps and the anti-democratic defense leagues. They were also active as strike-breakers in the Technische Nothilfe and were recruited in large numbers for the Black Reichswehr. After 1926, many Korps members

entered the National Socialists Students Association, and, operating through student government, were able to create disturbances and intimidate professors and students who supported German democracy. The Korps and the Nazis made common cause and were able to produce outbreaks of magnitude sufficient to warrant police intervention at the universities in Berlin, Breslau, Königsberg, Frankfurt, and Heidelberg.

An important academic group which contributed to the Nazi success was the Tat-Kreis, a circle of intellectuals around Friedrich Zimmermann (who wrote under the name Ferdinand Fried).[1] This group was strongest in Frankfurt, Darmstadt, and Heidelberg. Its basic idea was that the political and economic crisis of 1930-32 constituted an historical turning point marking the end of the capitalist system which, according to the cyclic theories of Oswald Spengler, was to be succeeded by an age of militarism. In addition to Fried, important members of the Tat-Kreis were Ernst Wilhelm Eschmann, a writer on Italian and European Fascism; Giselher Wirsing, the chief political editor of the "Münchner Neueste Nachrichten"; and Otto Abetz, later Nazi ambassador to France. Articles in Die Tat, the journal of the group, attracted many German students to Fascism and, eventually, to the Nazi Party. The Nazis rewarded the leaders of the Tat-Kreis with important posts after 1933.[2]

E. The Harzburg Front

After the abortive putsch in 1923, the Nazis proclaimed that henceforth they would operate as a "legal" party, seeking the support of all forces in Germany opposed to the Treaty of Versailles and the Weimar Republic. They now began to receive considerable financial support from such industrialists as Thyssen and Kirdorf, as well as from the Deutschnationale Volkspartei. The rapprochement with this party

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1. Fried's views were presented in his books, Autarkie (1931), and Das Ende des Kapitalismus (1931).
2. While Fried, Wirsing, Abetz, and others have become important Nazi publicists and politicians, Eschmann has apparently refused outright identification with Nazism. His publications deal with non-political subjects.

led to an agreement between Hugenberg and Hitler, signed 11 October 1931 at Harzburg, which created the Nationale Front, or the Harzburg Front. Although this alliance of the Nazi Party and the Deutschnationale collapsed during the presidential elections of 1932, it operated in the parliamentary opposition to Chancellors Brüning, von Papen, and Schleicher. The following year it became effective again and succeeded in making Hitler chancellor of Germany.

The co-operation of the Nazis and the nationalists went far beyond the usual practices found in German parliamentary blocs. One important means of co-operation was found in the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrwissenschaft und Wehrpolitik (German Association for Military Science and Politics). Among its leaders were prominent Nazis as Horst von Metsch, General Kochenhausen, and General von Epp. The leading theorist of the Gesellschaft was Professor Karl Haushofer, professor, general, and proponent of Geopolitik. Other members included General Heinz Guderian, the creator of the Panzer divisions, Müller-Brandenburg, later an important figure in the Nazi Labor Service, and Professor Schmidt-henner, one of the most prominent Nazis in German intellectual circles. The association provided the link between the Nazis and the nationalist intellectuals, enabling the Nazis to adapt their policy to the traditional objectives of German imperialism.

The nationalists hoped to use the Harzburg Front as an open conspiracy against the Nazis. The nationalist leaders believed that if the Nazis were given sufficient rope they would hang themselves politically and power would then descent upon the political professionals in the Deutschnationale. The Cabinet of National Unity, formed on 30 January 1933, included Hitler as Chancellor, Frick as Minister of the Interior, and Goering as Air Minister. But it also included von Neurath as Foreign Minister, von Papen (Center Party) as Vice Chancellor, Gürtner (Center Party) as Minister of Justice, and, as was noted above, Seldte as Minister of Labor and Hugenberg as Economic Minister. The make-up of the cabinet was interpreted as a victory for the Deutsch-

nationale. The professional politicians, however, miscalculated the power of the Nazis.

After he had obtained complete power through the Enabling Act, Hitler's first move was to eliminate the opposition and even his partners, the Deutschnationale. The Stahlhelm, as has been observed, was dissolved, and Hugenberg was forced to leave the cabinet. Dr. Oberfohren, president of the Reichstag representation of the Deutschnationale "committed suicide," presumably because he knew too much about the Reichstag fire. In order to prevent compulsory dissolution and confiscation of its property, the Deutschnationale Volkspartei voted its own dissolution.

III. THE VÖLKISCH (RACIAL) LEAGUES

A. Alldeutscher Verband

Most of the nationalist and völkisch associations in Germany stemmed originally from the Alldeutscher Verband or Pan-German League. Organized in the nineteenth century, the Verband was the outstanding exponent of German imperialist expansion and an uncompromising opponent of all liberal tendencies in the German Empire. Its members included civil servants, teachers, aristocrats, and officers; outstanding academic and military personalities of the day contributed to its publication, the "Alldeutsche Blätter." The Verband was not a mass movement in any sense of the term, but rather a pressure group whose members belonged to various political parties.[1]

During the first World War, the Verband advocated an unlimited expansion of territory and was influential in seeing that its ideas were incorporated in the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest. In 1917 it was responsible for the founding of the Vaterlandspartei which organized an "Independent Committee for a German Worker's Peace" to oppose on annexationist grounds the Reichstag's peace resolution of that year. Local chapters of the Committee were established in Germany to agitate for the prolongation of the war.[2]

The Alldeutschor Verband coined such phrases as "Germany's place in the sun," "A people without room" (Volk ohne Raum), and "Liberate the Germans living abroad." They proposed the establishment of a Greater Germany, based on racial nationalism. These ideas became the heritage of the völkisch leagues and eventually the dominant themes of Nazi policy.

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1. For bibliography see William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism (New York 1935) Vol. II, pp. 415-417; on the influence of the Leagues on German politics see Eckart Kehr, Schlachtflottenbau und Parteipolitik 1894-1901 (Berlin 1930).
2. The leader of the Munich chapter was Anton Drexler, also head of the six-man Deutsche Arbeiterpartei which Hitler joined in 1919 and ultimately transformed into the Nazi Party.

B. Organisation Consul, Oberland Bund, Rossbach Brigade

In contrast to the nationalist leagues, the majority of the völkisch leagues joined the Nazis at an early date. The outstanding examples were the Organisation Consul, Oberland Bund, and the Rossbach Brigade.

The Organisation Consul (OC), the most important of the early völkisch leagues, was a secret organization formed by Captain Herman Ehrhardt to carry on the work of the Marinebrigade after that Free Corps had been dissolved following the Kapp Putsch. This group, the first to display the swastika emblem in Germany, was responsible for many political murders, including that of Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau. After Rathenau's murder, the Berlin government issued a warrant for Ehrhardt's arrest, but he fled to Munich where the Bavarian police gave him a passport made out to "Consul von Eschwege," from which act was derived the name Organisation Consul.

The leaders of the OC were former officers and the members consisted largely of professional soldiers and students. Ehrhardt inspired fanatical devotion on the part of his followers; members of the OC would have given their lives to protect him. Although Ehrhardt personally disliked the Nazis, many members of the OC later joined the Nazi Party as an independent unit to serve as training officers for the SA. The rest of Ehrhardt's followers formed a fighting unit known as the Wiking Bund which entered into friendly relations with the Stahlhelm. In 1923, Ehrhardt led an armed expedition into Franconia at the same time that Hitler was preparing the Munich putsch. After his expedition was defeated by government forces, Ehrhardt ceased to play a decisive role in German politics. He continued to refuse to join the Nazi Party and is believed to have disappeared in the Blood Purge of 1934. The members of the OC, however, who joined the SS or SA were permitted to wear a special badge even after 1933, and the murderers of Rathenau were honored as "Heroes of the Nazi Movement."

The Oberland Bund grew out of the struggle between the government troops and the Bavarian Councils Republic in 1919 and the border war in Upper Silesia in 1920-1921. An Oberland Free Corps was formed at this time, but after its legal dissolution in 1921, the members formed the Oberland Bund and kept possession of a large supply of illegal weapons. The president of the Bund was Dr. Weber, an assistant on the faculty of the Munich Veterinary Institute; the military commander was General Aechter. The most colorful members of the organization were the Römer brothers whose names still have political significance in south Germany. The eldest brother, Dr. Fritz Römer (born 1890), known as Hammerwerfer, created a legend about himself by holding up foreign automobiles visiting the passion play at Oberammergau and turning over the foreign currency he obtained to the treasury of the Bund. The second brother, Dr. Ludwig Römer (born 1891) was nicknamed Lutz. Because of his speculations in inflated marks, he was responsible for the closing of the Pfälzische Bank, of which he was the director. The youngest brother, Dr. Josephy Nicolaus Römer (born 1893), familiarly called Beppo, was an ardent Nazi who later deserted Hitler to become a leader of the National Bolshevist movement.

The Oberland Bund was concentrated in Bavaria. It supported national unity and fought against both separatism and particularism. In September 1923, the Bund united with the Reichsflagge and the Munich SA to form the Vaterländisches Kampfbund which proclaimed Hitler, for the first time, as Führer. After the Munich putsch the Kampfbund disintegrated. The Reichsflagge resumed its status as a separatist organization while many members of the Oberland Bund turned National Bolshevist.

The Rossbach Brigade originated as a Free Corps in 1919 under a former officer to fight against the "reds" in Berlin and in the Baltic and Silesian wars. Within Germany, it served as a protective force for the Mecklenburg Junkers. The members of the Brigade were employed as managers and employees on the great estates, but they remained con-

stantly in a state of armed preparedness to attack the enemies of the Junkers. The Rossbach Brigade thus became a modern counterpart of the medieval mercenary army, or Landsknechte. Living on the estates of the Junkers, the members were paid by monetary system based on agricultural production. The unit of currency used within the Brigade and in the payments received from the Junkers was a hundred-weight of rye, thereby insuring the members an adequate income during the German inflation. They personified the völkisch ideal of a German "farmer and fighter." The members of the organization were conspicuous by their brown shirts, a uniform and political symbol later adopted by the Nazi SA.

Although the group was legally dissolved in 1920, it continued to exist as a secret society and was responsible for many political murders. In 1923, the Rossbach Brigade adopted a political program, couched in the mystical language which marked all expressions of German racial nationalism. The Brigade now aimed at the overthrow of the Weimar state and the establishment of military dictatorship. Its statutes proclaimed:

> "This organization is unpolitical and is independent of any political or economic organization. Its purpose is to preserve and advance the military efficiency of the people, to reinforce the might of the nation in time of need whether against foreign enemies or against domestic unrest. We would unite all men who stand ready to defend the Fatherland when necessary against foreign enemies and against the domestic enemies who would lift their hand against the constitution. In either case a distinction must be made between the enlistment of temporary volunteers in the Reichswehr and the formation of special units by the Reich. Mobilization will be carried out at the order of the Reich authorities and under their jurisdiction."

Rossbach himself, however, pledged his loyalty to the Reichswehr rather than to the civil state. The members of his Brigade served as special Reichswehr guards for dumps of illegal weapons. In time, however, Rossbach's violent methods conflicted with the political and diplomatic policy of the Reichswehr and Rossbach was imprisoned for a short period. In 1927, the Brigade was absorbed as a unit into the Nazi SA.

The Verband Nationalgesinnter Soldaten (League of Nationalist Soldiers), commanded by Majors von Bülow and Henning, was another im-

portant völkisch, anti-democratic league. Shortly after its founding, the Deutschnationale Volkspartei attempted to take over this group and integrate it into the Stahlhelm, but many of its members opposed the conservatism and monarchist tendencies of the Deutschnationale. In 1922 those who did approve formed the Nationalverband Deutscher Soldaten under General Abendroth and affiliated with the Deutschnationale. In spite of an official ban, the more radical members of the Verband formed the Völkischer Soldatenbund, an illegal military group which provided guards at various political meetings of the rightist parties. Close relations were established by the new groups with the OC and with the reactionary Verein Ehemaliger Baltikum-Kämpfer, an association of former Free Corps men who had fought in the Baltic under General von der Golz.

C. Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei

The Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei (German Racial Freedom Party) was founded on 16 December 1922 by Henning in conjunction with von Graefe-Goldebee and Reinhold Wulle, two Reichstag deputies representing the Deutschnationale Party. Von Graefe had been expelled from the Deutschnationale Party because of the fear that his dealings with Rossbach, Ludendorff, and the secret leagues would compromise the party. At the beginning of 1923, the Grossdeutsche Bewegung, a nationalistic movement founded by Rossbach, joined the Freiheitspartei, followed by such volkisch groups as the Deutsch-Soziale Arbeiterpartei, Grossdeutsche Arbeiterpartei, Deutschvölkische Schutz- und Trutzbund, Yorckbund, and Völkischer Soldatenbund. Von Graefe hoped that his political party would operate as a superstructure uniting the various völkisch leagues into a political movement.

The outstanding literary representative of this group was Graf Ernst von und zu Reventlow, a pan-German aristocrat who wrote prolifically on nationalism and diplomatic questions. The program advocated by the Freiheitspartei was similar to that of the Nazis; the creation of a Greater Germany and the bringing of all Germans living under foreign control under the jurisdiction of the Reich. In March 1923, the Freiheits-

partei allied itself with the Nazis, but few of its members took part in the Munich putsch.

D. Other Völkisch Groups

One of the leading figures in the völkisch movement in Bavaria was General Erich Ludendorff. He founded a league called the Tannenberg-bund composed of retired officers and some nationalist youths. Ludendorff's political importance collapsed after his association with Hitler in the Munich putsch, but the Tannenbergbund made a considerable contribution to the ideology of German Fascism. Ludendorff elaborated the "stab-in-the-back" legend to include alleged "secret forces" in Germany--"Jesuits, Jews, Freemasons." He was strongly opposed to all forms of organized religion and had a tremendous influence on the early pagan ideas of the Nazis. The Tannenbergbund, for example, revived and practiced the old heathen ceremonies and festivals, activities which later became an important part of SS and Hitler Youth rituals.

The differences between Ludendorff and the Nazis lay in their attitude toward the monarchy. While Hitler still vacillated in his early days on the question of monarchical restoration, Ludendorff blasted the claims of the princes, especially Prince Rupprecht, the pretender to the Bavarian crown. Ludendorff finally succeeded in turning the Nazi movement against a revival of monarchy, and thus contributed to the development of National Socialism from mere counter-revolution into a genuine Fascist party repudiating the forms of imperial politics. In 1925, the Nazis picked Ludendorff as their candidate for president, but he broke with the Nazis, interpreting their policy of "strict legality" as a "sell-out" to the Catholic Church. In his book "Hitler Sells Out to the Pope" he bitterly denounced the Nazis and repudiated their movement. In 1933 he refused to accept the post of Field Marshal and died in 1937 without having made peace with the Nazis.

The Artamanen is another example of a völkisch league which contributed to the future success of the Nazis. It was founded in 1924 at Halle by Bruno Tanzmann and Wilhelm Kotzde and derived its name from

archaic words meaning "land" and "men." Its purpose was to bring urban youth back to the land and to revive agricultural life in Germany. Unemployed youths volunteered for work on the farms under its auspices and agricultural schools were established on a co-operative basis. At annual conferences the Artamanen youth discussed political questions. Many Nazi leaders, including Himmler, spent a year on the land under the direction of this league. After 1933, the establishment of the Nazi Labor Service marked the realization of the objectives of Artamanen.

E. The Holstein Agricultural Leagues

In the period following the stabilization of the mark, many agricultural leagues were formed in Germany to prevent, by direct action if necessary the forced sale of land to satisfy debts and mortgages. To achieve this aim farmers of Holstein formed leagues to resist police officials and bailiffs who had to effect foreclosures. In 1928 the farmers placed bombs in five government buildings in Holstein, and in the following year a bomb was secreted in the Reichstag. The Holstein farmers found their leader in Walter Luetgebrune, an agrarian leader, who argued that they were waging "a struggle...against the Jewish-parliamentary system, against corruption and blind obedience to the state, against all treaties and commitments which ruin the farmer and deliver him over to the international bankers," (Neu-Preussens Bauernkrieg, p. 132). Luetgebrunne, who had defended Feme murderers, now came forward to defend the Bombenbauern (Bombing Farmers). Klaus Heim, a rich farmer, also became an outstanding leader.

The symbols of the Holstein farmers were the black flag and the sabot (Bundschuh), the emblem of the peasant uprisings of the late middle ages. In 1928 the Nazis were laying great stress on the "legality" of their political methods and refused to have any dealings with Heim, but in the end the Nazis were forced to recognize that the Bombenbauern were powerful allies in the struggle against the Weimar Republic. The Bombenbauern in Holstein developed into a national organization called the Landvolk, whose leadership gradually fell into Nazi hands. Bruno

von Saloman, editor of one of the leading papers, "Das Landvolk" in Itzehoe, was a brother of the assassin of Walter Rathenau.

After many government buildings had been bombed Heim was arrested in 1929 and convicted of breaking the law on explosives (Sprengstoffgesetz). After his conviction, the movement gradually disappeared as an independent organization and was absorbed into the Nazi Party where it was responsible for the Nazi argument of Blut und Boden (Blood and Soil) and for the Nazi law of entailed estates, designed ostensibly to protect small farmers against capitalist exploitation.

The völkisch leagues in general agreed with the objectives and methods of the Nazis. The opposition which existed between them may be explained largely in terms of the clash of personalities or regional interests. The völkisch leagues in Munich accepted Hitler as Führer only on the promise that Munich remain the Party headquarters. On the other hand, the independent völkisch groups in Berlin, which had a legal status under Prussian law, refused to accept the "drummer" Hitler. At the same time, the South Germans regarded the Berlin groups as composed of "Wotan-bitten illuminati."

The return to normal conditions after the stabilization of the mark and the resumption of peaceful employment threatened the existence of all völkisch groups throughout Germany. The members who continued their fight against the democratic regime, joined the Nazi Party after 1924, providing both the local leadership and the personnel necessary for the Party to function as a legal political party.

IV. THE NATIONAL BOLSHEVISTS

A. The Origin and Aims of National Bolshevism

National Bolshevism comprised two political attitudes, one of the extreme left, the other of the extreme right. Both attitudes were opposed to the system of liberal democracy, the Treaty of Versailles, and the Western orientation of Germany's foreign policy. Both left and right aimed at the revolutionary overthrow of liberal democracy and at the establishment of an Eastern orientation. But the ultimate goals of both groups were different. The left aimed merely to utilize nationalism, especially that of the youth, in order to transform Germany into a genuine bolshevist state. The right utilized proletarian discontent with capitalism as a step in preparing for Germany's imperialist aggression.

The term National Bolshevism became current in 1923 and was apparently invented by the Reichswehr on the occasion of the Küstrin putsch where the Black Reichswehr had tried to overthrow the republic. The Reichswehr, which had organized and supported the Black Reichswehr, sought to disavow its responsibility for the putsch by laying the blame upon elements which it called National Bolshevists.

The National Bolshevist groups were small in size. Some of the better known organizations were the Nationale Revolutionäre, National-Kommunisten, Neue Nationalisten, Sozialrevolutionäre Nationalisten, Jung-Nationale, Aufbruch-Kreis, and Revolutionäre Nationalsozialisten. They had no representation in the Reichstag, and their papers had a small circulation. Their influence in Germany lay in the fact that they were constantly changing sides. At one time the National Bolshevists would make common cause with the Communists, at another time with the extreme nationalists. It was in this way that National Bolshevist ideas made their appearance in the Nazi Party. National Bolshevists who entered the SA and became identified with its proletarian and socialist wing, or nationalists who became prominent in Nazi affairs thus helped to inculcate the idea that the Nazi Party should wage a revolution in Germany.

In addition to its importance in the Nazi party, National Bolshevism also affected Communist strategy and ideas in Germany. During the "battle of the Ruhr" in 1923 the German Communist Party tried to win the support of the right-revolutionary groups. For example, Karl Radek, writing in the Communist paper "Rote Fahne," glorified Leo Schlageter, the Free Corps leader and early Nazi, who was executed by the French for sabotage. By the slogan, "Beat Poincaré on the Rhine and Cuno on the Spree," the Communists attempted to equate French occupation of the Ruhr and Social Democratic leadership in Berlin as the proper objects of attack by workers and nationalists. Articles by Radek also appeared in "Reichswart," the periodical of von und zu Reventlow, the outstanding representative of völkisch ideals in the German aristocracy. In turn, both Reventlow and Moeller van den Bruck[1] proposed that the revolutionary workers and the proponents of German nationalism unite in a revolutionary movement to establish a "German socialism." Although the co-operation between Communists and nationalists practically disappeared after the French withdrawal from the Ruhr, it revived in 1930 when the Communist deputy in the Reichstag, Kippenberger, announced that Lieutenant Richard Scheringer, a dissident Nazi, had joined the Communist Party[2] and invited any other revolutionary nationalist in the Nazi Party to do likewise.

Only a few Social Democrats were attracted to this movement. One prominent Social Democrat who became a National Bolshevist was August Winnig, former leader of the building workers union and Oberpräsident of East Prussia, who denounced his party and participated in the Kapp Putsch. Another important former left-wing Social Democrat was school-teacher Ernst Niekisch, a friend of Kurt Eisner and president of the Central Council of Bavarian Workers and Soldiers Councils which proclaimed the Bavarian Councils Republic after Eisner's assassination. After the overthrow of this republic by the Bavarian Free Corps, Niekisch was imprisoned. Following his release, he sat in the Bavarian Diet as a Social Democrat. At the time of the Ruhr occupation he broke with

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1. See p. 23 below.
2. See p. 22 below.

his party over the question of passive resistance. Winnig and Niekisch established Der Widerstand ("Resistance"), a periodical which attracted the support of nationalist students.[1] This periodical advocated a National Bolshevist opposition to the Treaty of Versailles and the Weimar Republic. After the establishment of the Third Reich, Niekisch preserved his revolutionary attitude. He managed to publish his journal for a year after the Nazis had suppressed other National Bolshevist groups and papers, presumably because he had the protection of influential Army circles. In 1934, however, the journal was suppressed. Niekisch and his followers were arrested in 1938. Many committed suicide, others were sent to concentration camps, Niekisch himself was given a life sentence at hard labor on the grounds of "contemplating treason."

B. Typical National Bolshevist Elements

1. The National Communists (National-Kommunisten). The members of this group had the problem of maintaining loyalty to their socialist beliefs while pursuing nationalist aims. The National Communist movement originated in Hamburg where Fritz Wolffheim and Heinrich Laufenberg, presidents of the Hamburg Soldiers and Workers Council, proposed on 11 November 1918 that the war against the West be continued on a revolutionary basis. According to them, socialism could be achieved only if Germany were freed from the controls of the victorious powers and were allied with world revolutionary forces as represented in Russian bolshevism. (Both Wolffheim and Laufenberg were expelled from the Communist Party at the Heidelberg Congress of 1919 on the grounds of "syndicalist deviation." They proceeded to establish a splinter group called the Communist Workers Party /Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei/.) The National Communist movement was centered in Hamburg; branches were established in several German cities.

2. Dissident National Socialists. The National Socialists did not

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1. In addition to many articles in Der Widerstand, Niekisch wrote Politik und Idee (Dresden, 1929) and Grundfragen deutscher Aussenpolitik (Berlin, 1925. Winnig's most important book is Vom Proletariat zum Arbeitertum (Hamburg, 1930).

enjoy consistently friendly relations with the German Army. Generally, the Reichswehr considered the defense leagues and the Nazis as reserve forces, provided them with arms, and demanded military obedience. On the other hand, the Nazis and the leagues attempted to use the Army to further their own ends. The failure of the Reichswehr to aid Hitler in his Munich putsch, led the Nazis to establish cells in the Army to prevent such disappointments in the future. In addition, the Nazis wanted to win over the younger officers to their cause. The best example of Nazi infiltration into the Reichswehr, as well as of National Bolshevist dissidence in the Nazi Party is seen in the Scheringer affair. Richard Scheringer, Hans Elard, and one Wendt, three junior officers in the Ulm Artillery Regiment, had established a Nazi cell. In 1930, these officers were arrested for high treason. While he was in prison, Scheringer denounced Hitler and stated that he was leaving the Nazis in order to join the Communist Party.

Scheringer's action started a new movement called the Aufbruch-Kreis. The members of this group were chiefly National Socialist students, intellectuals, and young officers. Among the members was Beppo Römer who attracted many members of the Oberland Bund to the new group. Although Scheringer became a member of the Communist Party, the Aufbruch-Kreis was independent of the Communist Party and ideologically separated from it by its rejection of proletarian internationalism. The Aufbruch-Kreis was interested only in Germany, but like the Communists, based its hopes on an alliance with the Soviet Union. In 1933, the Nazis broke up this group and sent its members to a concentration camp.

The outstanding literary exponent of communistic nationalism was Moeller van den Bruck, whose book in 1923 popularized the phrase Das dritte Reich. He opposed all forms of international socialism and advanced instead a "German Socialism." He viewed the struggle to free Germany from foreign capitalist dontrol as the first step in achieving social freedom for the German workers. He constantly proclaimed that Russia and Germany should unite because of their common "spiritual"

interests. His ideas were important in the socialist wing of the Nazi Party, largely through the influence of Gregor and Otto Strasser.

Gregor Strasser, a druggist in Landshut, rose rapidly in the Nazi hierarchy and by 1924 was a Nazi deputy in the Reichstag. He was noted as "the best organizer in the Nazi Party." Often in conflict with Hitler and Röhm over the question of relations with the Soviet Union, he stated his policy in the following quotation:

> "May Germany never turn to the West, never aid American capitalism and British imperialism against Russia. Wherever the fight against Versailles goes on, there are Germany's natural friends and allies. May Germany take her stand against the coming Russia, by the side of Turkey, China, India, the Riffs, and the Druses. For Germany there can be no European peoples. For us there can be only those who favor the Versailles Treaty and those who would destroy it. Since Russia follows the same path, let her be Germany's ally--her form of government is no concern of ours."

Such a policy ran counter to the official theory of the Party as expressed in Hitler's Mein Kampf that National Socialism in alliance with the Western states should wage a crusade against "Jewish Bolshevism."

During the political crisis of 1932, Chancellor Kurt Schleicher tried to form a coalition government which would include Gregor Strasser's Nazi followers but would exclude Hitler's. For a time, it seemed possible that certain Social Democratic trade unions would join such a coalition, since Schleicher had declared that "it was not the purpose of the Reichswehr to protect an outmoded distribution of wealth." The attempted coalition failed, and Gregor's negotiations with the Chancellor marked his final break with Hitler. Both Schleicher and Gregor Strasser were killed in the Blood Purge.

The position of Otto Strasser differed from that of his brother. In his books and pamphlets he pointed out alleged inconsistencies in Nazi doctrines and strategy, claiming that Hitler was in favor of the expropriation of princely properties but received money from the German royal houses, that he was both for and against big business, and that he favored "legality" and dictatorship at the same time. Otto's main charge against Hitler was that he was a "heathen" and a fanatic. In addition to fundamental differences, Hitler and Otto Strasser quarreled constantly

over the ownership of and profits from the Party's newspapers, a share of which was claimed by Strasser. In 1930, Otto resigned from the Nazi Party, stating that "The socialists are leaving the Party." A few members followed his example, including Major Buchrucker, former leader of the Black Reichswehr in Küstrin, and Herbert Blank, leader of the Kampfgemeinschaft revolutionärer Nationalsozialisten. Otto Strasser fled from Germany in 1933. For a while, his group existed in Prague as "The Black Front" (Die schwarze Front), operating a radio station and publishing a newspaper. Otto continued to proclaim himself as the "true Nazi" and the "true Jacobin." In 1941, he founded a Free German Movement in Canada (not to be confused with the Communist-inspired Free Germany movement). Incidentally, Otto Strasser's representative in Argentina is Bruno Frick, who helped Martin Bormann (now Deputy Führer) organize Feme murders by the Rossbach Brigade in Mecklenburg.

A typical adventurer in the National Bolshevist wing of the Nazi Party was Walter Stennes. In 1919 he was a member of the "Special Detachment" of the Prussian State Police. This detachment joined Ehrhardt's Marinebrigade in the Kapp putsch. In 1920, Stennes founded the Bund der Ringmannen (League of Ring Thanes) to protect illegal stores of arms against their confiscation by the Allied authorities. In 1923, he was appointed captain in the Black Reichswehr and took part in the Küstrin putsch, and a short time later became SA-Führer in Berlin. In 1931 the Berlin SA, recruited largely from the unemployed, revolted under Stennes' leadership against Hitler's policy of legality. Hitler, contemptously called "Adolf Legality" by the opposition, was charged with favoring the Party bosses and neglecting the SA. The rebellious SA seized the Party offices in Berlin and brought out special editions of Der Angriff, the official Party paper. Stennes proclaimed the formation of a Nationalsozialistische Kampfbewegung and appealed for funds. The rebellion was finally crushed by the SS. Stennes was arrested, but was released. He went to China and is said to have been killed by the Japanese in 1937.

3. Nationalist Revolutionaries. Various splinter groups, representing shades of difference on the doctrines of National Bolshevism, came into existence in Germany between 1930 and 1933. Among them may be listed the Sozialrevolutionären Nationalisten, which also included the Arbeitsring Junge Front. This group published a newspaper called "Die sozialistische Nation." Other groups were Die Eidgenossen (The Confederates) which published "Der Umsturz"; Die Kommenden; Das junge Volk; Die Standarte; Der Vormarsch (originally affiliated with Stahlhelm); and Das Reich. These associations had in common an intense hatred of "the old system," whether represented by the Empire or the Weimar Republic. In general, these groups represented the nationalistic youth and intellectuals; older members came from the Free Corps, the veteran's sociaties, and dissident Nazi groups which disapproved of the Party's strategy. The groups were organized as secret societies and possessed many romantic notions of ritual and ideology. They attempted to place agents in the various political parties and conservative organizations in order to influence the course of military revival. At the same time, many Hitler Youth members were placed in the revolutionary leagues as agents of the Party.

An idea common to the majority of the leagues was the conception of a world union of "oppressed" peoples under the leadership of Germany. The national revolutionaries forsaw the combination of the "have-nots" against the "harvest," waging a world struggle against Western imperialism. This conception remained a powerful force in Nazi propaganda despite the liquidation of the revolutionary leagues and was effectively used to buttress the German alliance with Italy and Japan.

C. The Elimination of the left-wing opposition from the Nazi Party.

The Blood Purge of 30 June 1934 crushed the revolutionary movement within the Nazi Party and forestalled the demands that the SA be constituted as the German Army. Demands for social revolution and rearmament characterized the programs of many defense leagues in Germany, including the Nazi Storm Troopers. Rearmament would have enabled the members of the defense leagues as well as the SA to become regularly

paid soldiers and officers with an official standing in German society. The permanently unemployed men who had flocked to the SA and had made many sacrifices during the Party's lean years, felt that Hitler's pose of legality and his alliance with conservative and nationalist groups would make impossible the revolution which the Nazis had long promised to their followers. Similarly, the SA felt that its duties were being taken over by the SS and the newly-established Gestapo.

The demands of the SA in 1934 that they be combined as a group with the Reichswehr to form the German Army and that Hitler fulfill the Nazi revolution were opposed by the most powerful elements in Germany. The Reichswehr refused to incorporate the SA, the civil service and police opposed the use of the SA as a security force, and the conservatives opposed the revolutionary demands of the SA's socialist wing.

Hitler resolved this conflict by the Blood Purge. With the help of the SS he killed the leaders of the rebellious SA, including his oldest friends, Ernst Röhm and Gregor Strasser. In addition, he liquidated participants in the Reichstag fire, conservative-militarist leaders such as General Schleicher, Centerists, and all others connected with actual or potential opposition within the Party or among its supporters. Hitler justified his actions in the Reichstag by stating that he suddenly discovered that many SA leaders were homosexual and corrupt and had planned treason to the country.

Hitler's purge was directed against the Reichswehr and nationalists as well as against the SA. He knew that he could not expect full and complete subordination from them. By charging that the officers were conspiring with France, Hitler was able to settle his old scores with Generals Schleicher and von Bredow, as well as with von Kahr, the Bavarian official who had once humbled the leader in the Munich putsch, and with the Center Party leader Klaussner.

According to one estimate, at least eighty-five persons were killed in the purge. After it was over, Hitler himself issued seventy-seven pardons for murders committed by his men during that time. In

early July around four hundred death notices appeared in the German press of persons who presumably might have been liquidated. Other estimates place the number of deaths as high as eight hundred. The industrialists and conservative supporters were delighted that Hitler had crushed the "second revolution." The Reichswehr forgave the murder of Schleicher and von Bredow without difficulty. The loyal SA was given a free hand to murder its enemies in the concentration camps and to loot the property of the small-scale opposition. In the end, the Blood Purge strengthened the Nazi regime,

V. CONCLUSIONS

The defense and racial leagues established after the last war were never able to co-ordinate their forces or carry out their program. Co-ordination was not achieved until the various groups were absorbed into the Nazi Party. The failure of the defense leagues to become rallying points of the revisionist and anti-democratic sentiments makes the Nazi success even more striking.

The Nazis had certain political advantages which the leagues, either individually or collectively, did not possess. The greatest asset of the Nazis was Hitler. No league produced a leader comparable to him as a demogogue, or endowed with personality and political skills capable of attracting the diverse support and loyalty of conflicting groups. Hitler was the only nationalist leader able to win the support of the German people. The nearest approach to him was Captain Ehrhardt, picked by many groups as the "man on horseback" to save German militarism from the threat of democracy. But Ehrhardt failed to gain the support of all the defense leagues and Free Corps in the Kapp putsch (1920) and fell thereafter into complete political obscurity. Hitler, on the contrary, won the National Bolshevists, the industrialists, the petty bourgeoisie, the Junkers, and the Army leadership over to the Nazi cause.

Further reasons behind the Nazi success lay both in their strategy and their doctrines. The majority of the defense leagues were secret organizations which advocated the violent overthrow of the Weimar state and the revolutionary reorganization of German society. The Nazi Party in its early days was also a putschist group, but as long as it advocated these tactics, the Party attracted only a limited membership and was overshadowed by many of the rival leagues. The change in tactics in 1924, marked by an abandonment of the coup d'etat theory and the assumption of the role of a legal party, assured the Nazi success. Legality attracted the support of conservatives and of the petty bourgeoisie as well as those who wished to see the Weimar system changed

but hesitated to use violent methods. Legality provided the mass support necessary for the Nazis and their conservative allies to win at the polls.

In addition, the Nazi program was more attractive than any advocated by the defense or racial leagues. Instead of concentrating on single aspects of the nationalist problem, or forming a small group of like-minded people, the Nazi program was as inclusive as its membership. Everyone with a grievance, regardless of his social status or origin, found the promise of millenium in the Nazi program. It was all things to all men, sufficiently colorless to attract those too timid to join the leagues, but at the same time definite enough to win the advocates of violent nationalism. This goal was achieved by a clever balance of the pose of legality against objectives, which could only be achieved by violence both within Germany and in Europe.

The gap between legality and violence was bridged by the creation of an enemy--the Jews. The Nazi Party was the only nationalist organization which recognized fully that anti-Semitism was capable of use as a political weapon. The Nazis united German society around a struggle against the Jews who were alleged to be responsible for the economic distress in Germany and for the international "oppression" of the German people. The defense leagues fought a hopeless fight against foreign states and the military power of the central government, but the Nazis created an enemy which could be dramatized as an allegedly oppressive force but which was not strong enough to protect itself against the "will" of the German people.

APPENDIX: ORGANIZATIONS

NAME	PAGE
Alldeutscher Verband	12
Arbeitsring Junge Front	26
Artamanen	17
Aufbruch-Kreis	20
Bayerisch Einwohnerwehr	6
Bayern und Reich	7
Bund der Ringmannen	25
Deutschnationale Volkspartei	2
Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei	16
Die Schwarze Front	25
Holstein Bomberbauern	18
Jungdeutscher Orden	4
Landvolk	19
National-Kommunisten	20
Nationale Revolutionäre	20
Neue Nationalisten	20
Oberland Bund	13
Organisation Consul	13
Reichsflagge	7
Reichskriegsflagge	7
Revolutionäre Nationalsozialisten	20
Rossbach Brigade	14
Sozialrevolutionäre Nationalisten	20
Stahlhelm	2
Studentenkorps	8
Tannenbergbund	17
Tat-Kreis	9
Verband Nationalgesinnter Soldaten	15
Verein Ehemaliger Baltikum-Kämpfer	16
Vereinigte Vaterländische Verbände	6
Völkischer Soldatenbund	16
Wiking Bund	13